(b) whether the Navy is adequately prepared to meet the grim threat perception so repeatedly pointed out by him; and

(c) what steps are proposed to ensure optimum operational worthiness and the time schedule fixed for the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) 2/3rd of the Navy warships are normally kept in operational readiness to permit maintenance to be undertaken. However, the Navy has contingency plans to accelerate maintenance so as to have more ships available should the need arise. Navy is adequately prepared to meet any threat.

Army for internal disturbances

1531. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Army is being overused for internal threats;

(b) if so, whether reaction has been expressed on this issue by the Chief of the Army Staff; and

(c) how many times the army has been used for internal security and tackling insurgency during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Since the end of the decade of the eighties, the deployment of the Army on counter insurgency duties has increased substantially due to the situation prevailing in J&K and some North Eastern States.

(b) The Chief of the Army Staff has expressed concern in this regard.

(c) Units of the Army/Assam Rifles/ Rastriya Rifles have remained deployed for counter insurgency operations in the states of J&K, Assam, Nagaland and Manipur during the last 2 years on a regular basis. Some units have also been deployed in Tripura. In addition, the Army was called out for maintenance of law and order on 5 occasions in 1996, 2 in 1997 and 1 in 1998 in other States.

POWs of 1971 War

1532. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 60 armed forces personnel taken as prisoners of war in 1971 Indo-Pak war, are still languishing in Pakistan's prisons;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in the repatriation of these personnel and what has been the result of our efforts; so far; and

(c) whether Government are proposing to take up the matter at the political level to resolve this humane problem so that mental torture of families of these personnel could come to an end?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) As per information available, which has been compiled on the basis of various representations received from the family members of the missing defence personnel including representation from Missing Defence Personnel Relatives Association, there appear to be 54 defence personnel as prisoners of war in the custody of Pakistani authorities. As the nodal Ministry for this subject is the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), this Ministry has been requesting MEA to raise the issue at the highest level with Pakistani authorities. MEA, from time to time, had been raising the issue at the Prime Ministerial level and also during the Foreign Secretary level talks. The matter was last raised by the Prime Minister in Male with the Pak Prime Minister in May 1997. Pakistan has, however, been consistently maintaining that there are no prisoners of war in their custody.

The official position in this case is that all the missing defence personnel of 65 and 71 wars, after lapse of 7 years, have

been presumed to be killed and their families are given liberalised pensionary awards, which include liberalised family pension, gratuity, children allowance and education allowance for children.

बंगा डिफेंस रोड की मरम्मत

1533. **श्री रामजी लालः** क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे किः

(क) क्या यह सच है कि हिसार (हरियाणा) और पीली बंगा (राजस्थान) के बीच की सड़क रक्षा विभाग की सड़क है तथा यह सामरिक दृष्टि से अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है;

(ख) क्या सरकार को इस बात की भी जानकारी है कि हिसार से लगभग 15 कि०मी० तक उक्त सड़क अत्यंत खराब स्थिति में है तथा गत वर्ष सदन में इसकी मरम्मत करने का आश्वासन दिया गया था;

(ग) यदि हां, तो इस आशय के आश्वासन के बावजूद इसकी अभी तक मरम्मत न किए जाने के क्या कारण हैं; और

(घ) मरम्मत का कार्य कब तक पूरा हो जाएगा?

रक्षा मंत्री (श्री जॉर्ज फर्नांडीज): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) से (घ) हिसार से 15 कि०मी० तक की सड़क की स्थिति आर्य नगर से गुजरने वाली सड़क के 800 मीटर के टुकड़े में पानी इकट्ठा होने के कारण हुए कुछ गड्ढों को छोड़कर सामान्यतः संतोषजनक है। स्थाई उपाय के रूप में 800 मीटर के इस टुकड़े के स्तर को ऊंचा करने की योजना विशेष मरम्मत के रूप में पहले ही बनाई जा चुकी है और यह कार्य वित्त वर्ष 1998-99 के दौरान पूरा कर लिया जाएगा।

Justice Duggal Committee Report

1534. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the action, so far, taken on Justice Duggal Committee Report on Tihar Jail reforms, recommendation-wise;

(b) the reasons for delay in the implementation on the recommendations relating to reforms; and

(c) whether the Central Jail in the Capital continues to be plagued with various health hazards and serious problems, and fails to maintain conditions in which reformation of the inmates especially juvenile delinquents, petty and first offenders is a far cry?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (c) The requisite information is given in the Annexure. [*See* Appendix 184, Annexure No. 48].

Security Personnel killed in North-East

1535. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of people and the security personnel killed by the extremists in 1997 and till February, 98 in North-Eastern region;

(b) whether Government are not able to contain the situation there; and

(c) if so, what concrete steps are being taken to talk with neighbouring countries in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) During 1997, 1073 persons and 287 security personnel and till February, 1998, 153 persons and 45 security personnel were killed by the extremists in North Eastern region.

(b) and (c) No. Sir. The matter has been taken up with neighbouring countries and they have assured that they will not allow negative elements to use their territory for activities prejudicial to the interests of India.